TOPIC: OVERVIEW OF COLORADO GEAR UP

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**COLORADO GEAR UP** 

## I. SUMMARY

Colorado GEAR UP (CGU) is a federally funded grant program designed to prepare low-income students for college. The program is entering the first year of its third grant cycle, 2011-18; it is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The Colorado Department of Higher Education houses the GEAR UP program on behalf of the Governor's Office. CGU focuses on early interventions designed to raise the expectations of low-income students and increase their college attendance and success. Students participating in the program qualify for a scholarship.

## II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The current CGU grant provides support to 18 middle schools and 16 high schools in 12 school districts across Colorado. Participating schools were selected based on their high free and reduced lunch rates and low high school graduation and college matriculation rates. The current CGU grant will support 6,400 students over a seven year duration beginning in students' 8<sup>th</sup> grade through their first year of college.

The CGU model is providing students with intensive early remediation and concurrent enrollment programming, CLEP testing (College Level Examination Program), a college readiness curriculum including financial aid and literacy, and mentoring. CGU fosters a college-going culture that is driven and supported by data. The purpose of the program is to improve outcomes including increased high school graduation rates, college matriculation rates, postsecondary retention rates, and reducing the need for remediation in postsecondary for low-income, first generation students.

## 2010-2011 Cohort Results:

- 96 percent postsecondary acceptance and commitment rate among participants
- 50 percent of these students were accepted by and committed to a four year college
- 95 percent of participants in their senior year of high school completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Program-wide, 86 percent of students who enrolled in concurrent enrollment courses while in high school received a "C" grade or better
- 90 percent of the bilingual student population successfully passed the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) test while in high school, which earned them college credits
- 80 percent of participants who took a remedial course while in high school progressed to the next developmental level by the end of their academic terms